



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

Plans and Statistics Staff

OVERVIEW

Overall, the fishing action has been good, although some anglers continue to await a cold front that will actually kick off what some call a ‘traditional’ fall fishing season. While some are already hunting, many are wondering why go sweat it out on a deer stand, when there are still plenty of fish within easy reach of the piers and boat ramps. There are still plenty of opportunities to take a child fishing and introduce them to a past time that is healthy and fun for all involved.

A reminder to our readers. Next Friday, October 26, we will print the last issue of the Virginia Saltwater Review for the 2007 fishing season.

And don’t forget the Virginia Recreational Assessment Program. This is an effort for all of us to work together for Virginia’s fisheries.

Get hooked and report your catches at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com. The Virginia Saltwater Journal provides anglers the ability to start compiling a Virginia recreational fishing database, with data provided by Virginia anglers, for Virginia anglers, that will assist VMRC in future fishery management issues. See page 8 for more details!

And remember, you catch it, you fillet it, but then donate the whole carcass to science. Participate in the Marine Sportfish Collection Project, earn a project tee shirt, and find out about the age and sex of your catch. See page 9 for more details and where to participate!

Wachapreague -

At Captain Zed's, three citation flounder came in this week. Anglers are landing the best flounder at Drawing Channel. Gray trout and bluefish can also be found near the inlet. Offshore dolphin, wahoo, and a few billfish were reported, but no tuna were landed this week.

No one has been fishing, this week, out of the Wachapreague Marina. The Marina is being sold, and the new owners are taking over in November.

Cape Charles -

Speckled trout are biting at Chris' Bait and Tackle. Several citations were earned this week including a 6 lb 11 oz speckled trout landed by angler Robert Carpenter from the Cape Charles area. Four citation speckled trout were caught near Oyster this week (all in the 5 to 6 lb range). Flounder are still biting near Kiptopeke and Cape Charles, and spot are being caught from the Kiptopeke Pier.

At Cherrystone Bait and Tackle, nothing has been weighed in all week. This could be due to lack of campers at the campground. Reports of a few small flounder have come in to the shop.

Onancock –

Captain Wil reports that striped bass are beginning to arrive. Those being caught are legal, but small, and have been found along the islands and creeks of the Chesapeake Bay. A few larger ones have been caught in deeper water by those trolling. Flounder are still biting, but most of them are very small—that will be good for next year. Croaker and spot are still available, but are beginning to decrease. Though not plentiful, sea mullet have been biting in areas with shell bottoms. Small bluefish have also been landed in the area. Anglers in Onancock have noticed a lack of bait fish which could explain the slow start to the striped bass season. Captain Wil reports very light fishing pressure out of Onancock and Schooner Bay; most people are waiting for the striped bass run to pick up.

Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel –

Flounder have been the primary catch at Cobb's Marina. Three citations were issued last week for flounder in the 7 lb range from the 3rd and 4th islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. A release citation was also given for a 47 inch red drum caught off of Virginia Beach on live bait. Staff at Cobb's reports catches of mostly flounder with a few spot mixed in.

Staff at Wallace's Bait and Tackle report a lot of activity around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel with a variety of species. Numerous flounder have been landed with quite a few citations. Four keeper flounder (1 citation) were caught by the Cape Henry Light, this week, using cut bait. There were also several flounder landed around the 1st island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel using live spot. Tautog were available around the 3rd island (one angler earned a catch and release citation). At the 4th island, a citation (4 lb 4 oz) triggerfish was landed, as well as a citation (3lb 8 oz) croaker.

Cindy at Sunset Boating Center reported some striped bass landings at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and a few at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel. At the Monitor Merrimac, a few spot were reported as well as blowfish and croaker. A citation croaker (17 inches) was caught by Kenny Phares, Jr. at the Monitor

Merrimac Bridge Tunnel this week.

At Salt Ponds Marina, most of the catches this week were flounder. The majority were reported around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. There was a single citation red drum (49 inches) released by Jack Lawson at the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. According to staff at the marina, everyone is waiting on cooler temperatures and striped bass!

No citations were reported this week at the York River Fishing Center. Fishing has been slow, but anglers are still catching spot in the York River. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum), small striped bass, and speckled trout are also available in the grassy areas (3-4 feet of water).

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

Offshore action has been slow. It is time for the tuna bite to take off, but someone forgot to tell the tuna. The tuna bite to our north has us chomping at the bit. The good dolphin bite of last week slowed down this week. A few marlin are still being caught. The wahoo bite remains good. Boats spending the night out there are encountering decent numbers of sailfish. The slow tuna bite has led to more boats doing some offshore bottom fishing in order to put some meat in the box. Plenty of blueline tilefish are being caught with an occasional grouper in the mix. Closer to shore, the good king mackerel bite continues. They are being caught on live bait and on trolled spoons and plugs. The Sandbridge area has been good as has the Santore to the Tower Reef. Plenty of false albacore are in this same area and some Spanish mackerel are still around. Jacks continue to be found at the Chesapeake Light Tower. Big red drum are being caught by sight-casters along the Virginia Beach Ocean Front on down to False Cape. In the Chesapeake Bay, the spot bite continues. The Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel has been hot, but still there is no concentration of big spot. However, there are a lot of 10-10.5 inch spot. The Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel and the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel have both been producing striped bass for chunkers. Fish up to 21 pounds have been caught. Good speckled trout action is going on in Mobjack Bay, Goodwin Island, Poquoson Flats, and inside Back River. Flounder fishing has been decent at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, along the Baltimore Channel, and at the Cape Henry Wreck.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The weather will become more seasonal soon, but in the meantime fishing is good along the Mid Atlantic coast in October. The summer species are winding down, as the fall and winter players are ramping up.

The big news is the rekindling of the exceptional king mackerel run off the Virginia coast. Old timers are dusting off their old king rigs, and heading for the shoreline for the best action they have seen in years. Some boats are catching up to a dozen kings with a few smokers in the 40-pound class prompting exciting chases. Whether floating live bait, or pulling lures, spoons or ballyhoo, anglers are finding fish from Sandbridge to the North Carolina line, in 20 to 50-feet of water. Large red drum are also taking trolled spoons and cut bait tossed into feeding schools in the same areas. If you don't have a boat, the Little Island Fishing Pier is providing good red drum and king action for those putting in the time. Although a few stray cobia were hooked this week, finding more will be the exception.

Flounder are also keeping anglers busy with good catches of flatfish coming from channel edges and shoals within the lower bay. Those working jigs around Cape Henry landed fish topping 10-pounds this week. The Baltimore Channel, and the 1st and 2nd islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are also providing good catches for folks drifting with strip baits and minnows. Those venturing to the deeper water wrecks are finding good luck, although at times it is hit and miss. Decent sized sea bass are taking up the slack, along with some good trigger fish action. Amberjack and king mackerel are also circling some of these wrecks, although most of the amberjacks seem to be on the smaller side.

The Chesapeake Light Tower is still holding some jacks along with small king mackerel and Spanish mackerel. Smallish false albacore are also taking trolled baits from the Light Tower vicinity into the beach, but these fish are the most fun on light tackle.

Striped bass action is on and off, depending on whom you ask. Many are finding school-sized fish and bluefish by casting top-water poppers at the rocks of the artificial islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Those chunking at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, as well as those offering live bait over the tubes, are also experiencing success, but they are mostly slot-sized fish.

Spot are providing non-stop action all over the lower bay, inlets, and rivers, but the big yellowbellies topping a pound are yet to show. Local experts say we need one more cold spell to jump-start the yellowbelly action. The croaker bite is still steady with many fish between 2 to 3-pounds offering easy action, especially for kids at the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, Ocean View, and Lynnhaven Inlet.

The speckled trout bite is picking up as anglers partake in good size fish with many topping 22-inches within bayside creeks and inlets. The Lynnhaven speckled trout run is very good lately, with many boats finding limits of keeper fish within the basin up to 27-inches. Larger fish are still available in the Elizabeth River, although finding them can be trying. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are always a good bet with big pups taking lures intended for trout within the inlets. Cut bait is also working well for puppy drum (juvenile red drum). Surf and pier anglers are also enjoying a good run of puppy drum, with reports of decent fish coming from the wash from Fort Story to Sandbridge.

On the offshore scene, trollers are still awaiting the run of yellowfin tuna as they pass southward. In the meantime, boats are snagging lots of grass to get to the wahoo and dolphin, with intermittent shots at a billfish. Swordfish are also around for those drifting the abyss at night. Most of the swordfish are small, with an occasional keeper. Captain Skip Feller aboard the RUDEE ANGLER out of the Fishing Center had three swordfish hook-ups on an overnight trip this week, as well as a boat-load of big blueline tilefish and seabass.

Virginia Middle Bay -

Roger Wilkins from Jett's Hardware reports that the fishing is not as fast and furious as some would like, but there still are fish to be caught. Some nice bluefish are working the surface waters and can be caught trolling spoons. Legal size striped bass are showing up as well; however they are a little on the thin side. Anglers are

finding speckled trout around Dameron Marsh and gray trout are starting to school up in the deeper holes of the Chesapeake Bay. Spot haven't made their big appearance but should be starting soon.

Dan of Smith Point Marina had one citation croaker come in this week and said the croaker bite has been solid. Spot can be found as well. Charter boats have been heading north, chumming for bluefish and striped bass, and catching their limits around the Northern Neck and Middle Ground area. Some Spanish mackerel are still holding on but should be moving away at any time now.

Garrett's Marina reported striped bass landings in the shallows from the Tappahannock to around Whitestone. Trolling for them hasn't produced much though, as water temperatures are a still little too high. The water continues to be very salty, and myriad of fish usually found in the lower Bay this time of year can be hooked. However, the fishing for these species is spotty. For example, bluefish are still around and a 27 inch flounder was rumored to be caught off a pier around the Boulders area. Some big spot can be caught—they haven't schooled up yet, but should do so in the near future as water temperatures cool down.

Jerry Thrash of Queen's Creek Outfitters contributed the following:

Cooler air temperatures have yet to affect water temps significantly. To quote one avid fisherman, "Nothing has left but nothing has really turned on." No citations registered this week. With the forecast calling for continuing warm temps, we may have this situation for the next week or two. Fishing continues to be good for spot and for speckled trout. Unusually warm weather is keeping the temperatures up and holding the spot on their usual sites. Spot have been plentiful at the Spike and off Gwynn Island. Speckled trout have cooperated in the Ware Neck area, at The Hole-in-the-Wall, in the Piankatank and in the Corrotoman.

Pan-size gray trout are scattered throughout the area. They provide their best action on jigs and soft plastic in a moving tide in the evening and at dawn.

Schooling striped bass can be had by casting around structures such as docks, bridge pilings, rock piles and hard bottom using live bait, jigs or chumming. With warm waters, we may not have a trolling season for stripers until early November. Puppy drum have been caught this week by shallow water fishermen in the grass areas at the mouth of Winter Harbor.

Locklies Marina has seen several citation spot caught in the last few weeks with the yellow bellies starting to show up. The hot spot has been up around the mooring buoy of the Pickle Factory. Lots of bluefish are also being caught, from Tolls Point to Mosquito Point. Some nice size gray trout, are showing up around the Silo and rock fish and the occasional keeper flounder are also being landed.

Virginia Beach -

At the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, four red drum citations were reported this week from the False Cape Area. Inshore fishing has included cobia around the Sandbridge area and croaker, spot, speckled trout, puppy drum (juvenile red drum), and flounder in Rudee Inlet. Earlier this week, a citation croaker was landed from the inlet by 5-year-old Hunter Clark. Offshore action includes swordfish at the Norfolk Canyon and dolphin

at the Cigar.

Paula at Fisherman's Wharf Marina reported numerous catches of golden tilefish at the Norfolk Canyon with dolphin and wahoo also available offshore. Inshore action has included king mackerel and red drum found south of Rudee Inlet, near Sandbridge.

Virginia Piers -

The Ocean View Pier has seen a good run of spot and croaker lately, and people were able to fill up their coolers on occasion. The spot are getting larger but haven't reached that sought after yellowbelly size yet. Best times for the spot and croaker have been evenings and nighttime. A few large speckled trout have been seen in the mornings, as well.

The Lynnhaven Fishing Pier has seen slower action lately, as the water has been too clear for good fishing. There have been some spot at night, as well as some puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and speckled trout showing up.

The action at the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier has also been slow with water temperatures still hovering around 68 degrees. They have seen a few small spot with the speckled trout and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) making an appearance. The best action has been mostly bluefish still biting on the ends with plugs.

Outer Banks, NC –

The weather is starting to feel like fall, but the fish continue to bite like it's the summer. The water temperatures are bound to start dropping soon with the cooler air coming in so the fish will follow.

The offshore fishing in the Nags Head area has primarily consisted of small dolphin, a few yellowfin tuna and wahoo. The better fishing was found at the intermediate distances offshore which were producing blueline tilefish, some large king mackerel, triggerfish, black sea bass, tautog, and hake. Close to shore, the bluefish and Spanish mackerel were keeping people very busy. Fishing in the sounds and inlets was slow with only a few flounder, croaker, spot, and sea mullet landed.

Avalon Pier fishing has not been producing what is expected for this time of the year. King mackerel were keeping things interesting on the end of the pier along with some Spanish mackerel and bluefish. Clear water was keeping the bottom fishermen wishing for more, but they still were able coax a few spot, pompano, croaker and speckled trout to hit.

South of Oregon Inlet the red drum bite has slowed down as well, but there were still some good drum fishing to be had from both sides of the inlet and along the South Beach. Ramps 34 and 38 had the best showing along with sea mullet thrown in as well. Bluefish and Spanish mackerel still make it feel like summer for the people throwing lures.

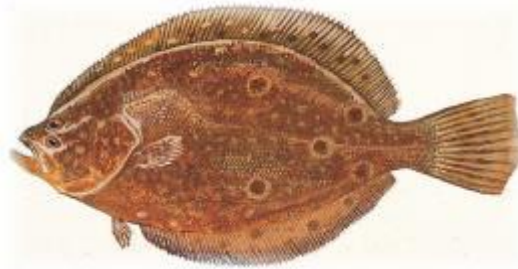
Oregon Inlet Fishing Center and Pirates Cove reported that the Northwest wind made it a little rough for people heading to the Gulf Stream, but those wind conditions did let up a bit later in the weekend. Twenty miles out, anglers were able to find lots of king mackerel with a few yellowfin and blackfin tuna, dolphin,

tilefish and false albacore to give a little variety to the day. Only a few billfish hookups were reported. Smaller vessels had luck closer to shore with flounder, gray trout and bluefish.

People fishing out of Hatteras Inlet were able to catch king mackerel, dolphin and wahoo with a handful of billfish being released as well. Offshore bottom fishing produced triggerfish and groupers. Inshore anglers were finding bluefish, speckled trout and red drum.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.





ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! **The Virginia Marine Resources Commission announces the**



Virginia Saltwater Fisherman's Journal

The Fisherman's Journal is a new tool that is intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows the individual angler to keep a record of their fishing experience that can be used to identify successful locations and conditions in the future. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it will benefit fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

Get Hooked and Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com/main.php>. The page header includes the Virginia Marine Resources Commission logo and the text "Virginia Marine Resources Commission Recreational Fishing Online Reporting". The main content area is titled "Recreational Saltwater Fishing" and "Welcome Virginia Fisherman,". It features a large graphic of a fish with the text "Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM" and "FISHermen". Below this, there are two main sections: "Report Trophy Striped Bass" and "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal". The "Report Trophy Striped Bass" section includes a description of the regulation (4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ.) and buttons for "Report Entry" and "Reprint Trip". The "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal" section includes a description of the system and buttons for "Journal Entry", "Reprint Trip", and "Reports". A "Search Public Data" section is also visible at the bottom.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting

Virginia Recreational ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Virginia Fisherman,

Report Trophy Striped Bass

Regulation 4VAC 20-252-10 ET SEQ. requires all striped bass kept during the trophy season be reported. Recording your trophy striped bass catch in this system meets Virginia's mandatory reporting requirement.

Report Entry Reprint Trip

Saltwater Fisherman's Journal

The Fisherman's Journal is a voluntary online reporting system. By recording your catch, you will develop a history of your fishing trips that may help you plan future trips by identifying successful locations and conditions. For each fish reported, you can decide if you want to share your catch data with other members. Additionally, you are helping the VMRC gather anecdotal data of species prevalence in the Chesapeake Bay. Your personal information will not be used or associated to the catch data. Lastly, you don't have to rely on your memory. You can complete this report form during your trip and then enter it online when you return.

Journal Entry Reprint Trip Reports

Search Public Data

Members can search with the data from the Fishermen's

Related Links

- Commonwealth of Virginia
- Governor
- VMRC
- License Requirements
- Fishing Licenses
- Artificial Reefs
- Saltwater Fishing Tournament
- Game Fish Tagging Program
- Saltwater Regulations

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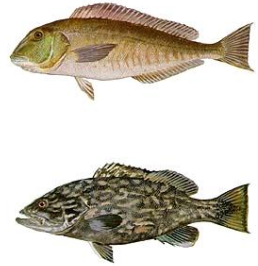



ATTENTION SALTWATER ANGLERS! THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION WANTS YOUR FISH.... TO MEASURE AND AGE



You catch it, you fillet it, but instead of throwing the remains in the trash, please donate them to science.

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA		RED DRUM	
SHEEPSHEAD		BLACK DRUM	
SPADEFISH		TILEFISH AND GROUPER	
TAUTOG			

In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT TO EACH PARTICIPANT.

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)

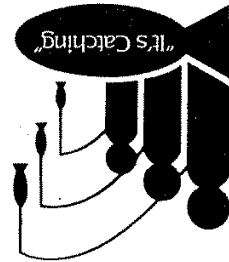
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)

Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)



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Practice

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